

# Big Ten Football Media Days

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Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

## Washington Huskies

## Coach Jedd Fisch

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the Big Ten.

JEDD FISCH: Thank you. It's great to be here in the Big Ten. Washington football is ecstatic to be a part of this conference.

I'd like to take this opportunity to start off by just saying that this experience and this opportunity to be the head football coach at the University of Washington, being the first year of joining the Big Ten, is an absolute privilege. I don't take it lightly. I'm extremely excited about this opportunity and believe that we have a great football team that will be able to showcase and compete for championships year in and year out.

Washington is among the elite football programs in the country. It's undisputably one of the greatest public universities academically and athletically, and I really believe that when President Cauce made the decision to join the Big Ten, we put ourselves in a position to be in an elite class and with an elite group of teams.

We brought a fantastic group of three players with us here today. Really proud of the guys. As I got hired in January, I started learning so much about our team and about our players and about the group of guys that we were going to be able to bring here today, and three that we brought are pretty special.

We brought Kam Fabiculanan, a safety that's been a part of Washington football for six years. He was recruited by Chris Petersen, coached by Jimmy Lake and Kalen DeBoer, and now chose to stay for his final year and be coached by us. He's someone who can bring an unbelievable spectrum of ideas and thoughts and values to our program and believes that his leadership will help us achieve our goals.

The next person I brought was Carson Bruener, one of our top linebackers. Carson has established his own legacy. Although he's a legacy player, where his dad was a 14-year NFL veteran, one of the greatest Washington Huskies that we've had, Mark Bruener.

Carson's done an incredible job since I've gotten here making sure that our program and what Washington football has been about for years meshes together.

Then I brought Jonah Coleman with us. Jonah was a running back for us at the University of Arizona. He was a part of our recruiting class of 2022, which I would say changed Arizona's football program. When we picked up and we left to come to University of Washington, Jonah came with us. Jonah is one of the best players, the best running backs in college football. Statistically led the nation in yards per carry a year ago, one of the highest-graded players in Pro Football Focus, and on top of that, just finished his last quarter with a 4.0 and is on the dean's list.

Really proud of Jonah and the jumps that he's made as a person.

We have a phenomenal coaching staff. Most of the guys have coached together for years. We were able to bring 21 staff members with us from our last spot. The three coaches we weren't able to bring, we brought two coaches from the New England Patriots and the linebacker coach from Alabama to fill out our staff.

The coaches we brought with us on offense have been together for four years. We've coached every game together since I've been a head coach at all five position groups. So proud of that, that those guys were a part of a 1-11 to 10-3 transition, where we ended up finishing 11th in the country. Defensively, I was able to bring John Richardson and Jason Kaufusi with us, two outstanding football coaches, and then, as I said, filled with in Steve Belichick, Vinnie Sunseri, and Robert Bala.

This group came here to University of Washington because we believe in Husky football. We believe that we have a chance and an opportunity to win championships like we have in the past. This is a program that's won two National Championships. It's a program that's won 18 conference championships. And this is a program that we believe will continue on that track.



Each of us expect a ton from our student-athletes. Our program is built on becoming a pro, a professional in life. Our players are expected to act like pros. They're trained to be pros. They're trained to be pros by coaches who have coached in the National Football League for over a hundred years. And we know that, if we train them to be a professional, whether that's the NFL or a professional in life, they're going to have a fantastic rest of their time.

We teach our players to always have the values of respect and accountability. Everything we do is for the University of Washington, and we say it's all about the W. The W in work, the W in winning, and the W in Washington. We take great pride in our state.

Washington football has beaten Oregon the last three times we've played. We've beaten Texas the last two times we've played. We've beaten USC the last two times we've played. And we're coming off winning 25 of our last 28 games. We are proud to be Huskies. We are proud to be in the Big Ten Conference. And we feel really good about our future as the college football playoffs begin to take shape. We respect our past, but we are excited about the future.

We have to build on all of that success with a brand-new team, something that's never been done before in college football. We will have 46 new scholarship athletes on a team that competed in the National Championship. We'll have an entire new coaching staff, an entire new training staff, an entire new strength staff, an entire new nutrition staff, and 21 of 22 new starters on August 31st. That has never been done before, and we're excited about that challenge.

We have four players on our team that recorded one start, and we are now starting over, and it's a true reboot, but so is college football. It is a whole lot of new. Everything that we're dealing with now with revenue sharing, NIL, with all the changes in the roster size, we believe it is the perfect time to rebrand and reboot.

Washington football right now is in a very unique time, and we all must work to come together as Huskies. We all must work to bring 12 Arizona football players and 36 Washington football players and the other 35 players from 12 different universities together to build this program, and we are excited about that opportunity.

We are not shying away from our competition. We will take our great city and our great university everywhere in this country to find players. Recruiting is the lifeblood of our program. We are going to build our team based on high school athletes, and we are going to build our team based on being one of the best recruiting staffs in America.

We'll use the portal to fill in holes, but this program is about development, and this program is about finding the best players in the country to help us succeed.

I look forward to August 31st. I look forward to our home opener in the Big Ten Conference against Northwestern, and I certainly look forward to being in this stadium once again at some point in time in December.

**Q. Let's talk about your quarterback Will Rogers, who set records at Mississippi State. He played under the late Mike Leach. What kind of production experience and leadership does he bring to the locker room, and what kind of pieces will he be able to build around with the offense?**

JEDD FISCH: He has 40 starts as a college football player. He's the son of a coach. He has an incredible football mind, football acumen. He played in Coach Leach's system for three years, and then last year played in a little bit more of a pro-style system where they were able to teach him a little bit more about playing under center and playing with more tight ends.

He brought really a great leadership with him. He has a great ability to communicate the game of football. What we've asked our quarterbacks to do in years past is control the line of scrimmage, and I think he'll be really good at that as well.

**Q. Given the reboot and all of those eye-popping numbers you mentioned about the transition, what are realistic expectations for your team this year?**

JEDD FISCH: For us, I want our team to be the hardest opponent that everybody plays. I want our opponents to feel like they left that game and they played two games in a row.

So our expectation is that we're going to be the toughest team that they play every week, and then from there we'll see, we'll let the score take care of itself.

We're not going to count wins and losses right now and try to figure out what that looks like. We tell our team there is no scoreboard. We just need to go out there and play our best games and see what that looks like.

**Q. Could you talk about some of the challenges in implementing a culture at Washington in a short period of time and maybe how your staff has overcome those this spring and summer?**

JEDD FISCH: I would say the biggest challenge, of



course, is you're taking over a program where Coach DeBoer did such a fantastic job in a short period of time with a veteran team. Those guys were old. We had 13 of those guys playing in the NFL right now.

So we had to build a culture with a bunch of guys that have never really started or played in games together that were very meaningful. We had to teach them what we would expect on a daily basis. They've embraced it. They've worked extremely hard together. They found a way to really open up their arms and embrace all the different type of players we brought in from all the different communities.

So our culture is that. It's a culture of belonging. It's a culture of inclusiveness, and it's a culture of wanting to make sure that, if we act and behave in a certain manner, that we understand that we can have a lot of fun competing.

**Q. You have some serious NFL lineage on your staff. Brennan Carroll, son of Pete, is your offensive coordinator, and Steve Belichick, son of Bill, on your defensive staff. What impresses you about these young men that are trying to follow in their fathers' footsteps as coaches, and how did you form relationships with these coaches as well?**

JEDD FISCH: Brennan and I coached together in 2011 and 2012 when I was the offensive coordinator at the University of Miami. He was our tight ends coach. Then we coached together in 2021, 2022, 2023 as our offensive line coach at Arizona. So this is our sixth year together.

Brennan is a fantastic communicator. He understands the game of football extremely well. He does a fantastic job with the offensive line, and he's a great recruiter.

Steve and I coached together in New England when I was coaching for the Patriots. I was the quarterback coach at that time. He was the defensive play caller and linebacker coach. So I had the utmost respect for Steve. I watched him work every day. I saw how good he was at his job.

So when he became available, to be able to bring him on board, I used Brennan to recruit him as well. We felt like we were able to put together two really good football minds. Obviously it's such an advantage for us when Coach Belichick comes out to practice, Coach Carroll comes out to practice. You've got two of the four or five coaches of the Mount Rushmore of coaches that are completely invested in our football program, which is one of the main reasons that we say we're going to give players the best chance to go play in the NFL.

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